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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 001922

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/29/2013

TAGS: [AEMR](#) [AMGT](#) [ASEC](#) [PREL](#) [CASC](#) [CVIS](#) [EFIN](#) [ETRD](#) [IZ](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: TFZ01: AMMAN SITREP 21 (3/31 1800 LOCAL)

Classified By: DCM Gregory L. Berry for reasons 1.5 (b)(d).

General Overview

[11.](#) (C) The Embassy operated on a normal schedule March 31. Consular services were open. Activities at the American Language Center remain suspended, and there is only restricted activity by FSN's at the Peace Corps office. Movements of American staff remain restricted.

Consular Issues

[12.](#) (C) Consular Section and RMO visited injured Amcit peace activist Mr. Weldon Nisly in a local hospital. He is recovering nicely, but will be unable to travel to the U.S. with his colleagues on April 1. One of his colleagues will be staying with him and they will probably depart in a few days. The other six Amcit peace activists are scheduled to depart for the U.S. on Tuesday.

[13.](#) (C) Voices in the Wilderness activist, Mr. Ramzi Kysia, earlier reported to have departed Baghdad on Sunday 3/30 for Jordan and not heard from since, is confirmed by two sources to have remained in Baghdad and is said to be okay.

GOJ Actions/Statements

[14.](#) (U) No new issues.

Security

[15.](#) (C) According to the PSD, a number of anti-war protests and gatherings were planned for March 31 in Madaba, the Baqa'a Palestinian refugee camp, and Zarqa University. The Women's Union and the Artists' Union also scheduled protests at two locations in downtown Amman, and a candlelight vigil is to be held in the evening at the King Abdullah Mosque. PSD did not intend to intervene or prevent any of these activities. As of 1800 we have received no reports of any violence or problems.

Economic and Trade Developments

[16.](#) (sbu) Bucking the global trend, the Amman Stock Exchange closed up 1.4 percent Monday, due to advances in the banking and industry sectors. The Central Bank confirmed that foreign currency demand continues to be unaffected by the conflict next door.

[17.](#) (sbu) Jordanian exporters complained about war risk insurance premiums and transport fees imposed on shipments to the GCC countries, which account for 15 percent of Jordan's exports. Insurance premiums have increased by three percent since the beginning of the war. Exporters say that transport fees to the Gulf have gone up 50 percent overall. Insurance companies have not imposed war risk premiums on other destinations.

[18.](#) (sbu) The Jordan Medical Association (JMA) called on its 15,000 members to donate JD10 (USD 14) each to "the Iraqi people resisting the U.S.-U.K. invasion of their country." The money is to go towards medical aid for the Iraqi people, according to the JMA vice president. The JMA is also sending a medical team to Baghdad.

[19.](#) (sbu) The Royal Jordanian Airlines (RJ) flight to Chicago was canceled Monday due to low passenger load. Airline officials report that, although the New York flight typically carries a 60% load, flights from Europe and the Gulf are currently running at about 20% of capacity. European airlines continue to operate on a reduced schedule.

Refugee/Humanitarian Issues

[110.](#) (SBU) Embassy Refcoord is scheduled to travel with DART team member April 1 to IOM's transit camp and UNHCR's still

vacant refugee camp near Ruwaished.

Press

11. (U) Front pages of all papers published March 31 continue to focus on developments in the war in Iraq. Major reports highlight the effect of the suicide bombings, a "division" in the Pentagon over the military operations, as well as the continued Iraqi resistance and the continued American and British bombing of Baghdad and Basra. A banner headline in Al-Arab Al-Yawm reads "Four Thousand Arab Would-Be Martyrs (suicide bombers) for Iraq." Covers of all Jordan's dailies feature above-the-fold photographs of civilian-area destruction or armed coalition forces searching Iraqi civilians.

12. (U) Letter to King Abdullah: Al-Arab Al-Yawm was the only daily to publish the letter sent to King Abudullah by 99 Jordanian personalities, including four former prime ministers (two of them, Mudar Badran and Ahmad Obeidat, former intelligence chiefs), one former parliamentary speaker (Abdul Hadi Majali, who is also a former Chief of Staff and former Ambassador to the US), and a number of former ministers and members of parliament. The letter said that, "Arab regimes are required to stand by Iraq in order to defend their own legitimacy that is threatened by this aggression." They also called on Jordan to "condemn this imperialist, iniquitous aggression," and to "refuse to recognize any political or legal consequences of this aggression," as a "minimal stand, around which the Jordanian people would rally."
GNEHM